

FY 2006 Farm Credit Administration (FCA) Annual Reporting Under E-Government Act of 2002 (Act).

1. FCA's Implementation of the E-Government Act

The Farm Credit Administration (FCA or Agency) is a Federal agency established under the Farm Credit Act of 1971, as amended (Act). We regulate and examine a nationwide network of banks, associations, and related institutions chartered under the Act. The institutions of the Farm Credit System (FCS or System) furnish credit and related services to farmers, ranchers, and producers or harvesters of aquatic products, their cooperatives and farm-related businesses. System institutions do not accept deposits. Their funding is derived primarily from the sale of System-wide debt securities and from the sale of stock that each borrower is required to purchase in order to obtain a loan. Consequently, System institutions meet the unique credit needs of the agricultural community while encouraging borrower control and ownership.

FCA is committed to the President's Management Agenda (PMA) and its initiative to expand electronic government. In the Strategic Plan (Plan) for FCA for fiscal years 2004–2009, the FCA Board recognizes the importance of the Agency's E-government initiatives. Of particular importance has been our expanding initiative to use our Web site to collect information from the System and to disseminate information to the System and the public.

The FCA maintains an ongoing dialogue with the System on improving business processes through the use of technology. We collect financial information (Call Report data) from the institutions through our Web site and make the Call Reports publicly available there. We partner with the institutions on using Virtual Private Network technology and encrypted e-mail to securely exchange information. We publish our examination manual, summaries of our legal opinions, informational memorandum to FCS institutions, and our regulations on the site. Internally, we are leveraging technological changes to the regulatory and examination processes. In the past year we implemented several electronic workflow applications to support the realignment of the Office of Examination and the Agency. The introduction of workflow applications including electronic leave slips, electronic Individual Development Plans and electronic performance plans and evaluations enhanced the efficiency of administrative tasks, thereby increasing the time available for mission-critical tasks.

Electronic information exchange with the institutions has improved customer service and reduced the administrative burden of FCA examinations. It has also improved Agency efficiency and allowed examiners to focus on areas of risk. The institutions have expressed appreciation for the ease of access to FCA's information and data. Our electronic government initiatives have reduced the time it takes them to get current procedures and reports, comment on proposed rules, and submit information for examinations. This year we set up a secure area on FCA's Web site where selected employees of Farm Credit System institutions can convey examination-related information. This approach is an efficient method of providing FCA examiners with pre-examination information that can reduce the amount of on-site examination time required, therefore reducing the cost of examinations.

Although the FCA primarily serves a narrow segment of the public (that is, the System institutions), we do invite comments from the general public also. On our Web site, the public can read and print public comments received on current proposed rules, notices, requests for comments, or similar items that we publish in the *Federal Register*. We provide a mechanism for users to tell us about inaccurate information on our Web site. We also include a substantial amount of information about FCA including information about job and procurement opportunities at FCA. Finally, a member of the public can submit directly to the Agency a query through “Info Line” or a FOIA request through an online form.

Although the FCA is proactive in its use of the Internet to disseminate information, we have been careful not to diminish services to those with disabilities or without access to the Internet. The FCA still distributes paper copies of its information to System institutions or members of the public that prefer that method of delivery. We allow the public to request information or send comments by telephone, regular mail, fax, or e-mail. We ensure that our electronic information and technology are accessible to people with disabilities in compliance with Section 508 of the Workforce Reinvestment Act. The FCA strives to use technology to improve and increase communication and services, not to limit them.

The Strategic Plan for FCA includes several performance measures related to E-government. FCA measures itself regularly against these performance measures and reports on its progress annually in the “Performance and Accountability Report.” These measures include: the number of newly developed FCA training courses that are available electronically, the percentage of Agency staff having broadband connectivity available to them, the percentage of the Agency’s Web pages and electronic devices that are Section 508 compliant, and the availability of information technology resources and information to users.

The FCA is a very small Agency with an overall budget of approximately \$42 million. Our E-government initiatives have not involved large expenditures on new investments nor the elimination of previous investments. As part of our overall information resources management program, we maintain a strong capital planning and investment control process. Our IRM Operations Committee (IRMOC), composed of managers from each Office who are knowledgeable about Agency operations, reviews all proposed investments and makes recommendations to senior management concerning their approval. The IRMOC review process considers cost, risk, anticipated return, and alignment with and impact on FCA’s enterprise architecture.

2. Agency Information on the Internet – Priorities and Schedules

The FCA posts all nonprivileged documents on the Internet as soon as the information is made publicly available. This includes all public (nonprivileged) publications and reports, Board meeting notices, news releases, nonproprietary Call Report information, and proposed regulations. There are no prioritization policies or schedules for publishing information on our Web site because we make all public information available. We provide a search engine on our Web site that displays search results in order of relevancy to the search criteria. Response time

on the Web site is equivalent to industry best practices. As mentioned earlier, the FCA primarily serves a rather narrow segment of the public (i.e., the System institutions that we examine and regulate). However, we facilitate and encourage the general public to request information or send comments to us by telephone, regular mail, fax, or e-mail.

3. Coordination of FCA's information dissemination activities with its FOIA operations to improve access and dissemination of government information to the public.

The FCA leverages its Web site to disseminate public publications and reports about Agency operations, such as FCA's Performance and Accountability Report and the FCA Annual Report on the Farm Credit System, Board meeting notices, news releases, nonproprietary Call Report information, FCA's regulations and proposed regulations, our examination manual, and summaries of our legal opinions. FCA's Web site also posts complete information about its FOIA operations. More information about FCA's FOIA operations may be found in [FCA's report](#) to the Attorney General and the OMB Director, pursuant to Executive Order 13,392 on improving agency disclosure of information.

FCA fulfills its responsibilities under section 207(d), "Categorizing of Information," by disseminating information about its operations directly to the FCA Web site so that it is available and can be categorized by Internet search engines. Examples of recently disseminated information are news releases announcing the FCA Board meeting agenda, summaries of Board actions, information on corporate activity of Farm Credit System institutions and selected financial performance indicators of FCS banks and associations. The FCA provides data from its Web site in a format that can be readily manipulated by standard software. For example, the Farm Credit System financial data available for download from FCA's Web site is available as a comma-delimited text file.

FCA fulfills its responsibilities under section 207(e), "Public Access to Electronic Information," by following guidance distributed by the National Archives regarding implementation of section 207(e), which highlights agency responsibilities to identify and schedule all electronic records and to transfer records that have permanent retention to the Archives. The FCA has records retention schedules in place for all existing systems and will be following the Archives' guidance in the design, development, and implementation of new systems.

As to FCA responsibilities under section 207(g), "Access to Federally Funded Research and Development," FCA does not fund Federal research and development (R&D) activities. However, FCA does have an excellent IT asset management and investment control program as documented in the 5-Year [Information Resources Management Plan](#).